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**Committee on Foreign Affairs**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

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OCA 3949-88

November 24, 1988

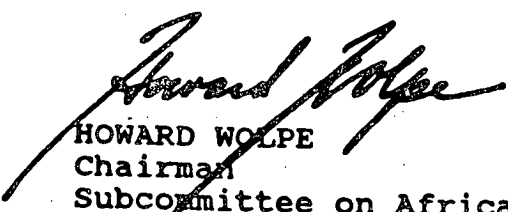
Dear Friends and Colleagues:


Enclosed please find a copy of the summary of our recent roundtable discussion, "Reassessing United States Policy Toward Somalia." We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your participation in the session and for your support in making the event a productive and stimulating one. It is your interest in and concern about the deteriorating human rights, political, economic, and military situation in the country that will help shape U.S. policy toward Somalia and toward the region as a whole.

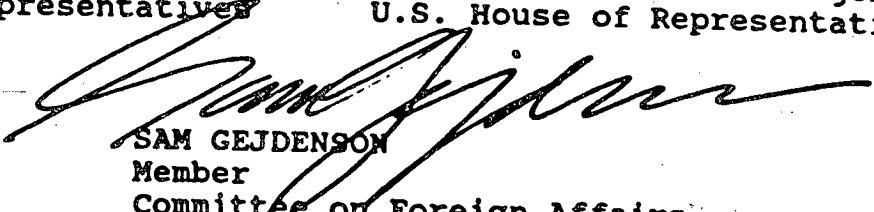
The summary represents only a brief overview of the detailed four hour discussion. If you want to review any of the particular panels in more detail, or if you would like to share your comments or suggestions for next steps, please do not hesitate to contact Helene Kaufman, Office of Congressman Sam Gejdenson, 225-2076.

Thank you once again for your interest.

Sincerely yours,

  
 HOWARD WOLPE  
 Chairman  
 Subcommittee on Africa  
 U.S. House of Representatives

  
 MICKEY LELAND  
 Chairman  
 Select Committee on Hunger  
 U.S. House of Representatives

  
 SAM GEJDENSON  
 Member  
 Committee on Foreign Affairs  
 U.S. House of Representatives

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SUMMARY

Congressional Roundtable Discussion

Reassessing United States Policy toward Somalia

November 15, 1988

Background: U.S. policy toward Somalia has remained stable despite the deterioration in the current political, military, economic, and human rights situation in the country. An intensified civil war has racked the northern part of Somalia since May 1988, forcing an estimated 350,000 Somali refugees to flee to Ethiopia where they face inadequate supplies of water, food, and shelter.

Amnesty International recently published a fifty-two page report documenting a persistent pattern of gross human rights violations in Somalia, and Human Rights Watch has testified before the House Africa Subcommittee about a serious deterioration in human rights as a result of the current conflict. It has also sent a nineteen page letter to Somali President Siad Barre recounting recent large-scale rights abuses, including the systematic bombing and execution of civilians. Human Rights Watch also expressed alarm over reports that refugees from Ethiopia were being armed by the Somali government and used as militia.

The strategic underpinnings of our policy have also come under recent challenge. A U.S. embassy official played down the strategic importance of U.S. military access at Berbera, calling it a "contingency facility", whose usefulness had been reduced by the recent fighting. Most important, President Siad Barre's failure thus far to resolve this conflict through peaceful negotiation assures protracted violence in the north and further long-term restrictions on our use of military facilities.

(2)

This protracted conflict has threatened U.S. strategic interests in the country, destabilized the present regime and the national political situation, and further undermined the dismal human rights record of the current government. The plight of the refugees remains uncertain with no government plan for repatriation of Somalis in Ethiopia or reconstruction of the northern war zone.

International relief experts with experience in Somalia, including some in the United Nations, question whether the recent Somali government appeal for international donor aid will assure genuine relief and reconstruction in the north for the refugees now in Ethiopia versus a program for government sympathizers that fails to address the fundamental political problems which underlie the crisis in the north. Similar doubts arise with respect to United States humanitarian aid, especially whether the field hospital recently sent to the Somali government will actually serve the victims of the bombing. Some suggested that the shipment of the hospital reflects a lack of clarity in U.S. policy. The situation has changed, but the objectives of sensitive relief items such as the field hospital remain uncertain.

Finally, several key international experts doubt that the government of Somalia will implement a serious economic reform program, given current political and military uncertainties. Will the proposed aid actually reach the victims of the conflict and the people in need? Is the international donor community simply helping to prop up a regime that no longer represents the needs and aspirations of the Somali people? At a time of scarce foreign aid resources, can the U.S. justify significant levels of support to Somalia?

Congressional Concerns and Actions: The House and Senate have put a joint hold on funding to Somalia. The House Subcommittee on Africa has offered the possibility of a compromise on funding that would permit a portion of the funds from fiscal year 1987 and 1988 to be used for economic policy reform, while the remainder would be held until progress on human rights and reconciliation are well underway. The recent Congressional concern about Somalia has affected an estimated total of \$59.250 million in Economic Support Funds for fiscal years (FY) 1987, 1988, and 1989 -- FY 1987 \$15 million, FY 1988 \$21 million, and FY 1989 \$23.250 million. The Foreign Affairs Committee has agreed to a possible expenditure of \$17 million dollars -- \$8 million for international debt repayment (FY 87 monies), \$7 million for agricultural goods and \$2 million for debt payments to the U.S. (FY 88 monies). The Appropriations Committee has a hold on all FY 1988 ESF.

(3)

Several staff indicated that scheduled U.S. economic aid should be postponed until the chairmen of key Congressional committees determine that the Siad regime has moderated its behavior and has initiated a meaningful dialogue with the opposition. According to both Senate and House staff, funds for 1989 have not yet been formally discussed. However, staff believe that since funds for fiscal year 1987 and 1988 are either on hold or not being used, there is no reason whatsoever to release fiscal year 1989 monies given scarce foreign aid resources.

We understand that the Administration is still expecting to ask for over \$20 million Economic Support Funds to Somalia, despite all the controversy surrounding aid to that country. At the same time, the House Appropriations Committee has a full hold on economic assistance to Somalia.

With respect to U.S. policy, the staff participants were in agreement that the current policy does not justify requested levels and should be revised. Nancy Stetson, Senate Foreign Relations staff, and others emphasized that current policy is far too ambiguous, and hence, in need of rethinking. Staff reiterated that all aid to Somalia, economic and military, now requires that "none of the funds appropriated in this Act shall be obligated or expended for Sudan, Jamaica or Somalia except as provided through the regular notification procedures of the Committee on Appropriations" (H.R. 4637, Fiscal Year 1989 Foreign Aid Appropriations Bill).

Integrating Human Rights into U.S. Policy: Aryeh Neier, Human Rights Watch executive director, told conferees that Somali forces "have used the pretext of the war to unleash a campaign of terror throughout the north." The roundtable discussion underscored the persistent pattern of gross human rights violations in Somalia and the lack of responsiveness by the Siad Barre regime.

Neier referred to the Atlanta Constitution article on Somalia in which Kenneth Bleakley, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Refugee Programs for the Department of State, described the extreme abuses in the north, citing refugee eyewitnesses who claimed to see planes strafing civilian refugees fleeing the bombing in northern cities. Carol Corillion, National Academy of Sciences, reported on the human rights delegation from the Academy that visited Somalia in early 1988 and documented the relentless examples of human rights abuses and the lack of responsiveness of the government to the delegation's pleas for action on individual cases.

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Strategic Interests and Economic Reform - The Bottom Line:  
Several persons expressed concern that U.S. strategic interests in Somalia were in jeopardy, given the protracted conflict in the north and the uncertain political situation. Others suggested that our strategic interests needed to be re-evaluated due to the extreme changes in the military and political conditions. Staff stated that U.S. policy should focus on human rights progress and political stabilization, since these were in our long-term strategic interest. In fact, some suggested that strategic interest should no longer be defined solely in terms of access to military facilities, but should also focus on political and economic stability. Others argued that even if our strategic interest is defined solely in military terms, the usefulness of the military facilities is directly related to a stable political and economic environment.

There was little consensus on what might be the Soviet response to a possible opening in Somalia if U.S. aid were reduced even further. One staff person mentioned the fact that the government of Somalia had requested and received arms from Libya. Another wondered why the U.S. would want to be on the same side as the Libyans. A business-as-usual U.S. policy was viewed as only contributing to further instability. Most participants indicated that the United States and the international donor community needed to condition aid to assure that international agencies were permitted to serve the victims of the violence in the north and monitor conditions there.

Many others indicated the need for progress on human rights, economic reform, and reconciliation before aid is resumed. House Subcommittee on Africa staff director Steve Weissman's remarks on the limitations of economic policy reform, given the current political instability, were echoed by several others. They also questioned how economic policy reform could be successful without economic development and reconstruction of the north.

Refugees, Repatriation, and Reconstruction Options: An excellent panel of speakers discussed the actual conditions in the refugee camps in Ethiopia, where about 350,000 Somalis have fled to escape recent fighting in the northern part of Somalia. While the camps were fairly well organized and services were being provided, the refugees face serious shortages, including water (one liter of water per day was the norm per person), fuel, and shelter.

Others expressed concern over the arming of Ethiopian refugees in Somalia as a paramilitary force. This is against United Nations and United States regulations. A question was also raised regarding food aid to these armed refugees. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (U.N.H.C.R.) was unable to verify

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the status of food aid. Roger Winter, U.S. Committee for Refugees, asked for a clarification of the issue from U.N.H.C.R.

There was some concern that the government of Somalia would be unable to assure that the proposed United Nations-sponsored emergency relief and reconstruction program for the north would actually serve those in need. Some pointed to the current crisis in Sudan, particularly the limitations of the government-run relief efforts there.

The need for adequate international monitoring and accountability of donor aid, including the United States development and food assistance programs, was reiterated by several persons. Of course, no aid should be provided by any donor until the international agencies are permitted access to the north and are in place with a reasonable monitoring procedure and service delivery system.

RECEIVED 8 P.M. 11/11/88

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**CONGRESSIONAL ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

**REASSESSING UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARD SOMALIA**

NOVEMBER 15, 1988

**LIST OF ATTENDEES**

1. Rudy Ramp	CARE	(212)	686-3110
2. Ahmed A. Gure	Somali Embassy	(202)	342-1575
3. Abdia Sh-Ahmad	Somali Embassy	(202)	342-1575
4. Gayle Smith	Coalition-Horn of Africa	(202)	898-1568
5. P. Solomstin	USSR Embassy	(202)	328-3225
6. Anthony Fouracre	United Nations	(212)	963-7584
7. David Stuligross	Center of Concern	(202)	829-8582
8. Leonard Zuza	OMB	(202)	395-3920
9. Nomi Taslitt	General Accounting Office	(202)	695-1713
10. Pat Dickriede	General Accounting Office	(202)	695-1713
11. Ibrahim J. Mead		(202)	797-0828
12. Hiram A. Ruiz	Office of Refugee Resettlement	(202)	673-3420
13. Neil Amos	Congressman Moody	(202)	225-3571
14. Robert Rieselbach	Congressman Moody	(202)	225-3571
15. Carol Corillon	National Acad. of Science	(202)	334-3043
16. Marina Ottaway	American University	(202)	885-1657
17. Patrick Erant	Congressman Dellums	(202)	225-2661
18. Gretta Stoval	Congressman Mazzoli	(202)	225-5401
19. John Stoval	Congressman Mazzoli	(202)	225-5401
20. Cherly Schneider	Congressman Frenzel	(202)	225-2871
21. Krista Riddley	Congressman Nagel	(202)	225-3301
22. William Schuerch	House Appropriations Ctm.	(202)	225-2041
23. Joanne Wallin	Congressman Frenzel	(202)	225-2871
24. Rebecca Rozen	Congresswoman Boxer	(202)	225-5161
25. Amy Moore	Congressman Wyden	(202)	225-4811
26. Jennifer Stevens	Center of Concern	(202)	829-8582
27. Nancy Carman	Subcommittee on Africa	(202)	226-3596
28. Judy Zadeh	American Jewish Ctm.	(202)	265-2000
29. Tim Rieser	Congressman Leahy	(202)	226-3684
30. Barbara Karl	Refugee Voices	(202)	832-0020

31. Brenda Branaman	Congr. Research Service	(202)	707-7687
32. Kim Caskin	Congressman John Lewis	(202)	225-3801
33. Ali D. Ali	CAME (private firm)	(202)	234-9482
34. Linda Feldman	Christian Science Monitor	(202)	785-4400
35. Ibrahim Samater	Somali National Movement	(202)	354-2008
36. Mohamed A. Farah	Somali National Movement	(202)	998-8445
37. Mohamed Adwale	Org. of Somali Affairs	(202)	862-8417
38. Abdi Sabrie	Org. of Somali Affairs	(202)	459-6741
39. Abdivahman Mohamed	Somalia	(202)	565-9225
40. Abdisalam Barood	Somalia	(202)	379-2823
41. Mark Murray	House Appropriations Ctm.	(202)	225-2771
42. Brenda Pillors	Congressman Towns	(202)	225-5936
43. Abdalla M Abdalla	Somali National Movement	(202)	931-2048
44. Holly Burkhalter	Human Rights Watch	(202)	546-9336
45. C. W. Corey	U.S. Information Agency	(202)	485-2078
46. Helen Scoville	Amnesty International		
47. Jennifer Windsor	Congressman Ted Weiss	(202)	225-5635
48. Larminah Rab			
49. Lynnea Olsen	Congressman Dingell	(202)	225-2754
50. Anyd Veil	Human Rights Watch		
51. Ismail Ahmed			
52. Abdo Hassan			
53. Hussein Boulale			
54. Ahmed Mahdi	Somalia National Movement		
55. Auleiman Abdillahi			
56. John Prendergast	Center of Concern	(202)	635-2757
57. Abdi Hassan Abdulle	Somali National Movement	(202)	998-4125
58. Ahmed I. Nalayeh	Somali National Movement	(202)	820-6198
59. Mahamoud Mahaned	Somali National Movement	(202)	820-6198
60. Lance Clark	Refugee Policy Group	(202)	387-3015
61. Carolyn Waller	Washington Lawyer's Ctm.	(202)	682-5900
62. Hussein Arraleh		(202)	751-1246
63. S Else Yestuf			
64. Roger Winter	U.S. Ctm. on Refugees	(202)	347-3507
65. Jason Clay	Cultural Survival	(617)	495-2562
66. Sharon Robinson	Congressman Bob Carr	(202)	225-4872
67. Bill Scally	Reuters	(202)	224-0241
68. Pauline Baker	Carnegie Endowment	(202)	797-6474
69. Tracey M. Tate	TransAfrica	(202)	547-2550
70. Bernie Arouson	The Policy Project	(202)	333-8801
71. Caleb Rossiter	Arms Control Foreign Policy Caucus	(202)	226-3440
72. Sharon Pauling	Bread for the World	(202)	269-0200
73. Patrica Sosa	Congressman Fuster	(202)	225-2615
74. Mahad Ali Aden	law firm	(202)	483-4365
75. Kerry Bolognese	Foreign Affairs Ctm.	(202)	226-7825
76. Alex Arriaga	Cong. Human Rights Caucus	(202)	225-3531
77. Karen Davis	Congressman Porter	(202)	225-4835
78. Msnamed Husein	Somali National Movement	(202)	671-3679
79. Mohamed Abdillahi	Somali National Movement	(202)	379-2823



82. Mike Hannis	formerly UNHCR Somalia	(202)	232-6799
83. John Hemphill	Congressman Steny Hoyer	(202)	225-4131
84. Meg Donovan	House Foreign Aff. Ctm.	(202)	225-5021
85. T. O. Brennan	House Foreign Aff. Ctm.	(202)	225-5021
86. Gerald Pitchford	House Foreign Aff. Ctm.	(202)	225-5021
87. Steve Morrison	Subcommittee on Africa	(202)	226-7807
88. Jeff Clark	Select Ctm. on Hunger	(202)	226-5470
89. Nancy Stetson	Senate Foreign Relations	(202)	224-4651
90. Myra Dandridge	Congressman Gejdenson	(202)	225-2076
91. Helene Kaufman	Congressman Gejdenson	(202)	225-2076
92. Steve Weissman	Subcommittee on Africa	(202)	226-7807
93. Habague Osman	C.S.I.S.	(202)	775-3134
94. David Ottaway	Washington Post	(202)	334-6000